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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/437,726	11/09/1999	WILLEM P. C. STEMMER	02-029220US	8363

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EXAMINER

SISSON, BRADLEY L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1655

DATE MAILED: 12/19/2001

19

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/437,726

Applicant(s)

STEMMER ET AL.

Examiner

Bradley L. Sisson

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 October 2001.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 27-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 28-37 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 09 November 1999 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Newly submitted claims 28-37 are directed to an invention that is independent or distinct from the invention originally claimed for the following reasons: Claims 28-37 are drawn to a polynucleotide which corresponds with the invention of Group III in the Office action of 14 February 2001, paper No. 11, which was not elected by applicant in their response of 12 March 2001, Paper No. 12.
2. Since applicant has received an action on the merits for the originally presented invention, this invention has been constructively elected by original presentation for prosecution on the merits. Accordingly, claims 28-37 have been withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. See 37 CFR 1.142(b) and MPEP § 821.03.

Specification

3. The title of the invention is not descriptive. A new title is required that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed. It is noted with particularity that the elected invention is drawn to a method for obtaining a polynucleotide that encodes a polypeptide having rubisco activity and not to the enzyme per se.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35

U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

6. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

7. Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Minshull et al. (WO 97/35966), Spreitzer (Anna. Rev. Plant Physiol. Plant Mol. Biol.) and Wolter et al. (PNAS, USA).

8. Minshull et al., disclose a method of recursive sequence recombination or gene shuffling whereby a gene of interest is evolved (page 4). The method comprises steps whereby the shuffled or recombined gene is screened and selected. The method is applicable to the shuffling of a plurality of genes as well as to the evolution of but a single gene (pages 13). At pages 21-33

Minshull et al., disclose the method of shuffling as it relates to the evolution for a specific gene where enhanced catalytic properties with a substrate is desired. Method of screening and selection of clones is also disclosed.

9. Minshull et al., do not teach the screening of genes for enhanced rubisco activity explicitly but do teach a method that is broadly applicable to the shuffling of genes and the selection of genes with the desired characteristics.
10. Spreitzer disclose the genetic structure of rubisco and its function. At pages 416-418 the aspect of selecting for mutants of rubisco is disclosed.
11. Wolter et al., disclose the shuffling of rubisco gene during evolution.
12. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have adapted the method of Minshull et al., so as to allow for the shuffling and screening of polynucleotide sequences that encode rubisco with desired properties as the gene for rubisco had not only been isolated and characterized and known to undergo shuffling naturally, but the gene product, rubisco, was of long and intense interest in the art and the isolation of desirable mutant clones continued to be of much interest. In view of the explicit suggestions by Spreitzer to find desirable clones, and in view of the broad applicability of the method of Minshull et al., to the shuffling of gene(s) and screening and selection of desired clones, the ordinary artisan would have been not only highly motivated but would have also had a reasonable expectation of success.
13. For the above reasons, and in the absence of convincing evidence to the contrary, the method of claim 27 is considered to be obvious in view of the combined teachings of the cited art of record.

Conclusion

14. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).


15. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

16. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bradley L. Sisson whose telephone number is 703-308-3978. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 6:30 AM to 5 PM.

17. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gary Jones can be reached on 703-308-1152. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-3592 for regular communications and 703-308-0294 for After Final communications.

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18. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0196.



Bradley L. Sisson
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1655

BLS
December 15, 2001